

and tinsel of this world, there is no such catalogue of names as this to be found in the compass of history. They are far greater than the twelve Cæsars. Instead of lessening, it increases their fame, that they were generally of lowly station. They were honored with the company and confidence of the Prince of the kings of the earth; and their actions and their teaching have had a more permanent, more extensive and more blessed influence on the opinions, the character, the happiness and the destiny of mankind than those of the most illustrious philosophers, legislators, kings and conquerors the world ever saw. There are four lists given of the names of the Apostles—one in each of the three first Gospels, and one in the 1st chapter of the Acts. These lists all differ from each other in some minute circumstances easily explained, and particularly in the order of the names, so that we are not to suppose, that they are curiously arranged with the view of settling the rank and precedence of the apostles. Whatever superiority any of them had above the rest, was a superiority of attainments, graces and services, and not a superiority of office, for in this respect they were equal. Peter and Andrew are indeed always put first; and they may have attained that honour, as being the first, who were called to be disciples. Peter is generally understood to have been the elder of the two brothers, and therefore placed before Andrew; and there can be no question, that, though Peter had no superiority of office, he was a much more celebrated character than most of the apostles.

As we have here a complete catalogue of the apostles, I shall give in the same order a brief sketch of some of the principal parts of their history, as far as is known from Scripture, or sufficiently authenticated from other sources. And first of Peter:

“Peter” was born in Bethsaida, a town on the shore of the sea of Galilee, or lake of Genesaret, in the district of upper Galilee. He was the son of Jonas, or Jonah, of whom we read nothing more; and he was, by trade, a fisherman. He was brought by his brother, Andrew, to Christ; the result of which introduction he would ever gratefully remember. His original name was Simon, the same with Simeon; which, since the time of Jacob’s son of that name, was a common name among the Jews, and signified “hearing,” or “he that hears.” When he was brought to our Lord, He told him that he was to be called by the new name of Cephas—the word in Syriac for a stone or rock, as expressive of the firmness and decision of his character. Cephas, rendered into Greek, gives our word “Peter.” He was a mar-

ried man, as is expressly said by Paul, and as appears from the account we have of his wife’s mother being miraculously cured of a fever by Christ. He appears to have pursued his original occupation for some time after his introduction to Christ; but when formally called, on a memorable occasion, along with three other disciples, he left his nets, forsook all and followed Him. In the context we have his appointment to the apostleship mentioned. Equal in rank, he surpassed most, perhaps all, of the twelve in zeal; though sometimes his zeal degenerated into rashness. A few of the many striking occasions on which he came prominently forward may here be noticed. When Christ was walking on the water to the ship in which the disciples were, Peter, having asked and obtained permission, left the ship, and began to walk on the water to meet his Lord; but when he saw the water boisterous and rising, he was afraid and began to sink, and cried out, “Lord, save me;” on which Jesus “stretched forth his hands and caught him, and said unto him: O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt.” From this part of his history we learn that we should not unnecessarily expose ourselves to dangers and temptations; that Christ sometimes allows his people to have their own choice in such cases, to humble them and prove them; that even in the most dangerous circumstances, if we be strong in the faith, we shall proceed with confidence and safety; that if, when turning away our eyes from Christ, we fix them on the difficulties and terrors with which we are surrounded, we shall fall or sink; that if, when beginning to sink, we call on Him, He will uphold us; and that, though He will rebuke the weak believer, He will never leave him to perish.

When many of those who had been following Christ became offended at some of His doctrines, and went back and walked no more with Him, and He then said to the twelve, “Will ye also go away?” it was Simon who thus nobly spoke out and replied for himself and the rest: “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe, and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And much in the same spirit, when our Lord, after hearing the different opinions which were entertained of himself, said to the disciples, “Whom say ye, that I am?” Simon Peter answered and said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” It was on this reply that Jesus addressed to him the most gracious words, “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjonas,” or son of Jonah, “for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee,